

## War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: Jeanneane Engle Teti

Current home town: Fairborn

Age: 74

I was 3 years old when Pearl Harbor was bombed. I had just turned 3 years old in October. My father, Loy Engle, who was in the Army Air Corps and stationed at Wright Patterson, had been cross country (now called TDY) for a couple of weeks, and when he returned to Wright Patterson, he along with the rest of the men that went with him were restricted to the base. My mother never knew what he had been doing; it was all secret. When she went to visit my grandparents who lived two blocks outside the gate at the base, she carried me and had to walk because she did not drive and my father could not leave the base. Within 2 weeks, Pearl Harbor was bombed, and within 2 weeks after that, my father was shipped to the Pacific. He was not home for that Christmas in 1941, nor for the next three Christmases. I remember when he left. The men who left that day marched outside the gate at the base up one of the main streets in town to the train that was setting on the railroad tracks waiting for the men. There were train cars filled with soldiers hanging out the windows, waving and throwing kisses. When my father climbed aboard the train, that was the last I saw him for over three years. When he came home and walked into the front door in his uniform, I did not know who he was and backed away from him. My mother said "that is your Daddy." He died in 1993 at 83. My mother (Jeannette Engle) died in 2011 at 95.

My mother's sister's husband, Uncle Stuchell, who was also in the Army Air Corps, worked with my father on the flight line, he was a mechanic and my father was a crew chief at Wright Patterson. He was shipped to England for the duration of the war. He passed away in 1983.

Five of my mother's six brothers went into the Army: Fred (died in 1973), Tom (died in 1995), Bill (died in 1984), Jim (died in 1991) and Gene Nobling (died in 1987). The last two served in Germany in the infantry. My Uncle Gene fought at the Battle of the Bulge when he was 18 years old. When they came home, they never spoke about the War or what they saw. My Uncle Gene at one time did say he didn't know if he was killing his cousins. My grandparents were both German descendents. My maternal grandparents lived in Fairfield, Ohio, two blocks from the base gate at Wright Patterson, and approximately three city blocks from the runway. After my Uncle Jim, who had been in Germany fighting, came home, whenever he would hear a plane coming in for a landing at the base, he would, out of instinct, roll out of his bed and get under it. I was told this by my mother and one of my aunts, who still lived at home with my grandparents. I had an aunt (Erika Franzelius) in the Army during World War II. She joined so she could be with my Uncle Jim, but every time she was transferred close to him, he was transferred. Sometime after the War ended, my Uncle Jim and Aunt Ricky (died in 2009?) got married.

I had two cousins on my father's side of the family that were in the service during the War. One was in the Navy, my cousin Bob Engle (died in 2000?), and Jack Engle (died in 2009?) was in the Army Air Corps like my father. He was a gunner in the belly of a B24.

During the war, we had rations for food and other items. My maternal grandmother would give my mother the ration stamps she had for milk so my mother could buy milk for me. Gasoline was rationed. We had a car, but with my father gone, the car was not driven. Stockings were hard to obtain because the silk was needed for parachutes.

We had an air raid warden and when it was black out, we had to pull our drapes or blinds, and there could not be any light coming from the houses. The warden would walk through the neighborhood and check to make sure there was not light showing – I guess because we lived next to the base, Wright Patterson. I would sit on the floor with my back next to the radio (which was a floor model and about four feet high), in the dark listening to my favorite programs.

When it was announced the war was over, one of my mother's sisters, Aunt Ivie (Iva Nollling), who died in 1981, her husband Uncle Bob Bornmann, who died in 1976, and their daughter (my cousin) Carol, picked my mother and me up. My cousin and I rode in the car, and my mother stood on one side of the car on the running board. My aunt stood on the other side and we drove down through town and people were banging on pots and pans, hollering and crying.

We were so happy that the war was over and my father came home, and that all my uncles, aunt and cousins survived the War. It was a time when we did not get much information from those overseas fighting the war and we never knew what was happening because what letters that were sent from them were censored so that information that was classified would not be divulged. It was a sad time for those that did not come home or were disabled, but they paid the price so we here at home would have freedom.